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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

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PROFESSOR SALMOND, writing in the *Critical Review*¹ of the appearance of Gore's Bampton lectures for 1891, on *The Incarnation of the Son of God*, said: "It is a book of note, both for its own merits and as a token that the time is at hand when the attention which has been concentrated on questions of criticism will pass to the great questions of doctrine." The remark was abundantly justified during the following decade, at least as regards the doctrine with which Canon Gore dealt. Perhaps no similar period in the history of the church witnessed the production of so large a volume of literature upon Christology. Canon Gore's lectures, revealing the intrusion of kenotic views into the Anglican fold, were in part responsible for this activity, but beyond the bounds of that communion there was scarcely less thought along the same line. Fortunately, there has been little controversy. There have been sharp differences of opinion, but few charges of heresy, and only one case of arraignment for views advanced, viz., that of Professor Gilbert, of Chicago Theological Seminary. Hence no smoke of battle has obscured the field of investigation.

Gore followed his Bampton lectures with his *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation*, in which, besides discussing the virgin-birth and the relation of the idea of transubstantiation to the doctrine of the incarnation, he developed further his kenotic views with relation to the consciousness of our Lord in his mortal life. Fairbairn set forth *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, with especial reference to the critical movement in Germany. Gordon, in his *Christ of To-Day*, showed the relation of the doctrine of Christ to some of the larger scientific, philosophical, and ethical movements of the time. Powell, in his *Principle of the Incarnation*, has unconsciously given the *reductio ad absurdum* of the two-nature

¹ Vol. II, p. 101.

hypothesis. Ottley, in his *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, has retraced the path of Dorner along the line of history. Somerville has expounded *St. Paul's Conception of Christ* by a careful biblico-theological investigation. Forrest, in his *Christ of History and of Experience*, has attempted to follow the mundane consciousness of Christ over into his supra-mundane activity. Gifford, in his *Incarnation*, has produced a painstaking study of the crucial passage, Phil. 2:5-11. Gilbert, in his two volumes, *The Revelation of Jesus* and *The First Interpreters of Jesus*, has familiarized English readers with the "ideal pre-existence" formerly advocated by Beyschlag and Harnack, now in part abandoned by both. Paine, in his two works, *The Evolution of Trinitarianism* and *Ethnic Trinities*, has attempted to show that the whole Trinitarian movement is the outgrowth of a false philosophy. W. L. Walker, in perhaps the most noteworthy work of all, *The Spirit and the Incarnation*, has set forth the two Christian doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the incarnation in their indissoluble relation.² I have not been able to trace a similar activity of thought in other than English-speaking lands, but no list of works upon Christology within this period would be complete without reference to the New Testament biblical theologies of Beyschlag and Holtzmann, and to Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, which are quite as significant as anything which has been written.

But, in spite of the learning and skill devoted to the study of the subject, there is one branch of it that has received very little attention, and that is the movement of thought within the New Testament itself. That there are different types of teaching upon the subject in the New Testament is patent to every thoughtful reader, but interpreters have almost uniformly sought a mere reconciliation of these types. The result has been determined by the dogmatic pre-

² Other works upon the theme within this period, of more or less significance, are: ORR, *The Christian View of God and the World*; STEENSTRA, *The Being of God as Trinity and as Unity*; WHITON, *Gloria Patri*; *The Divinity of Jesus Christ* by the authors of *Progressive Orthodoxy*; MASON, *The Conditions of Our Lord's Life on Earth*; BRIGGS, *The Messiah of the Gospels* and *The Messiah of the Apostles*; SWAYNE, *Our Lord's Knowledge as Man*; DU BOSE, *Soteriology of the New Testament*; BISHOP HALL, *Christ's Temptation and Ours*; F. J. HALL, *The Kenotic Theory*; HAWKESWORTH, *De Incarnatione*; RICHEY, *The Incarnation and the Kenosis*; ADAMSON, *Studies in the Mind of Christ*; SIMON, *Reconciliation through Incarnation*; ILLINGWORTH, *Divine Immanence*; STALKER, *Christology of Jesus*; GRIFFITH-JONES, *Ascent through Christ*.

suppositions of the author. One school accepts the more rudimentary type of New Testament teaching, and either by *tours de force* of exegesis reduces all seemingly higher types to the level of the lower (Beyschlag, Wendt, Gilbert), or else regards all higher types as simply speculative perversions of the simplicity of Christ's teaching (Harnack, Holtzmann, Paine). The other school, to which the majority of the writers named belong, plants itself upon the higher type of teaching, and either reads it into the lower type by forcing the meaning of terms, or else claims that the higher type supplements or supersedes the lower with a more authoritative doctrine. Meanwhile the question remains unanswered as to the way in which there came to be varieties of doctrine in the New Testament. What were the psychological processes in the minds of New Testament writers as they meditated upon the person of Christ? Do the different types of thought lie merely side by side, psychologically unrelated to each other, or are they stages of a process of thought; and, if the latter, are they related to each other simply as less and more, or are there transitional views, not permanently tenable in themselves and significant only as showing a trend? The answer to these questions will furnish the only possible irenicon between contending schools.

To put the problem in a different form: Here was a being who lived a human life—was born, grew, lived, spoke, thought, suffered, and died as a man. Within at most a century of his disappearance from the earth he was worshiped as God, and a belief in his deity was frankly avowed by large circles of sane and intelligent people. That a man of the common people should have been exalted to such rank would have been a startling fact even in Athens or Rome, with all their pantheons and their myths of apotheoses and divine incarnations. That it came about in monotheistic Judea, with its transcendent Deity, is at first thought simply amazing. Our problem is: How did it occur? We must leave out of account the question as to the justification of the process in order to determine the process itself. Most christological investigation is unsatisfactory because of the insecurity of its biblico-theological foundation. Most investigation of the New Testament doctrine is vitiated by the intrusion of dogmatic presuppositions. Dogmatic conclusions are indispensable,

but it goes without saying that they should never be drawn until the facts upon which they rest have been properly determined.

Two of our gospels open with narratives of the miraculous conception of Jesus. It has frequently been assumed that belief in his deity was the result of the acceptance of this putative divine Fatherhood. But the fact is that the miraculous conception formed no part of the apostolic preaching, and could not have been generally known in Christian circles until after the process of which we are speaking had been substantially completed. Jesus was recognized as divine by the early Christians long before they knew anything of the miraculous conception. So far as our present investigation is concerned, belief in the miraculous conception of Jesus might much rather have been a consequence of belief in his deity than a cause of it. In general, the story of the miraculous conception is inadequate to account for a belief in the deity of Jesus. Nothing in the narratives of the miraculous conception enables us to discern in it more than a physical fact. The deity of Jesus was in any case a spiritual fact. Neither our metaphysics nor our psychology enables us to establish a necessary connection between the physical and the spiritual in any particular case; how much less did those of the first century? So far as can be seen, Jesus might just as well have been divine by a natural conception. He need not have been divine by a miraculous conception. As Whiton says,³ it is "a most inconsequent bit of logic by which theologians assert that a specific physiological process—the miraculous conception of the Holy Child—is the necessary basis of such a spiritual fact as a life whose ethical glory is manifestly divine."⁴ Christian theology has never been able to establish any plausible relation between the reputed fact and the accepted doctrine. The only suggestion that has ever been made is that the miraculous conception was necessary to free Jesus from the taint of the sinful inheritance of humanity, but no plausible reason has ever been assigned why that taint would not descend in one line of human ancestry as well as in two. The narratives of the miraculous conception therefore lie outside of our present investigation, and stand or fall on their own merits, irrespective of other Christian teachings.

We have left, then, as our starting-point, only the self-consciousness

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁴ WALKER, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

of Jesus as reflected in his words. Every belief regarding him must in the end justify itself out of that self-consciousness. No one could ever have known anything about the inner depths of his nature of which he himself was ignorant. For his words we are confined to the first three gospels. In view of its obvious differences from the first three, we cannot use the fourth indiscriminately. Criticism has in general established the reliability of the synoptic gospels, while it discredits the fourth, denying to it the character of a colorless narrative of the deeds and words of Jesus.

The Jesus of the synoptic gospels does not call himself God, and does not speak as God. On the contrary, the God of his people is his God. He worships that God, to him he prays, of him he speaks as his Father. He acknowledges dependence upon God even in his ethical life in words as plain as it is possible to make them. To be sure, he never associates himself with his disciples in any allusion to God by the use of the first person plural, but neither, according to the Pentateuch, did Moses thus associate himself with Israel. The fact may arise from Jesus' consciousness of a unique fellowship with God in which he was aware the disciples had no share. He need not have been conscious of co-essential deity to be conscious of an entirely unique relationship to the Father which would make an association of himself with his disciples in allusions to the Father inappropriate. He never asserts nor intimates pre-existence.

To all this it may be replied that Jesus does accept from others the title "Son of God," and that he directly or indirectly designates himself as "the Son," thereby confessing to essential deity. But everything here turns upon the question what the term "Son of God" connoted on the lips of those who used it. What did demoniacs, Peter in his great confession, and Caiaphas at the trial of Jesus, mean by it? Whatever the Jews may then have anticipated regarding their Messiah, they did not anticipate in any sense that he would be divine. Even if it were true that a divine revelation had been vouchsafed to Peter, or a Satanic revelation to the demoniacs, Caiaphas had received no revelation, and he used the term only in its current signification. If used by him as a title of the Messiah, the presumption is that it was so used by others. But Caiaphas plainly makes it a synonym of Messiah: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"⁵

⁵ Mark 14:61.

The charge of blasphemy that follows would certainly have lain, according to Jewish conceptions, against anyone falsely assuming messianic prerogatives. That "Son of God" was a current messianic title cannot be proved from contemporaneous Jewish literature, but such use lay close at hand, and probably it was so used, though the literature does not reflect it. No Jew acquainted with the second Psalm and with 2 Sam. 7:14 could fail to identify the title with the Messiah. It was doubtless something more than a mere designation of the Messiah, as it added the thought of the peculiar honor in which he was held of God. On Jesus' lips it is the expression of that filial consciousness out of which messiahship flowed.

All men, as creatures of God, his children; Israel the favorite heir and first-born among the peoples; the theocratic kings the sons of God in an especial sense; the Messiah the unique Son and middle point of a kingdom in which the conception of sonship finally again embraces all and regains its original universality upon a higher plane—these are the stages of the gradual narrowing and reactive widening which this chain of ideas runs through in its now theoretic-natural, now human-ethical applications.⁶

But neither in the popular view nor in Jesus' own did sonship imply pre-existence. As to the other title by which Jesus commonly designated himself, "Son of man," happily that type of exegesis is becoming obsolete which inferred that because Jesus so designated himself he meant precisely the reverse. The dispute over the Aramaic original of the term and its signification is not finished, but it can at least be said that if Jesus used the term as messianic, following the usage in Enoch, which in turn is based upon Daniel, then it was the most colorless of current designations of the Messiah—a "veiled" term, as Beyschlag calls it—and was most open to such special content as Jesus chose to put into it.⁷

While all this is true, there are at the same time utterances of Jesus which open mysterious depths in his consciousness, flashes of a life that is altogether unique among the sons of men. He forgives sin. He claims lordship over the sabbath. He calmly expands or nullifies the divine law, given, according to Hebrew tradition, at Sinai. He assumes a position of sonship over against God's servants, the prophets. He anticipates sitting as the final judge of men. He

⁶ HOLTZMANN, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 265.

⁷ BEYSCHLAG, *op. cit.*, 2d ed., Vol. I, pp. 65 ff.

gives the keys of the kingdom of heaven. He speaks of his coming on the clouds of heaven. He promises to confess before his Father in heaven those who confess him upon earth. If the baptismal formula be an authentic utterance of Jesus, then he associates himself with the Father and the Holy Spirit as an object of confession. "All things," he says, "have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."⁸ This passage determines the measure of the term "Son" in its inner significance for Jesus. It means that to him had been granted the final and perfect revelation of God to men.

The justification of the expression depends upon the religio-ethical absoluteness of Jesus, by virtue of which he is the complete revelation of God, in himself hidden.⁹

These utterances may be divided into two classes—assumptions of a unique official position with reference to men, and expressions of a unique fellowship with God. The latter are reinforced by his whole life, by the perfect freedom of his relation to God, by the absolute assurance of his approach to the Father, and by the absence of any traces of a consciousness of sin.

He who has widened to infinity the bounds of personal obligation, and intensified in men the abiding sense of lost opportunities and dishonored ideals, himself retains the unclouded serenity which is "the bright consummate flower" of self-realization. This is not a different attainment in goodness, it is a different type of moral character, another order of humanity.¹⁰

His saying, "None is good save one, even God,"¹¹ receives its significance in the light of this fact of consciousness.

He will not allow the rich young ruler to imagine that his goodness proceeds from within himself, and that it is some secret by which the young man, too, can be taught to make himself good with a self-made goodness, and worthy of eternal life. Such a notion could only start the man again upon that weary path of pharisaic self-righteousness which inevitably ends in failure and bitter disappointment. "If you think me good," he seems to say, "I can assure you that that goodness comes from a source that is higher than myself, and that source is one from which you also may draw. The only way in which human character can be trained for eternal life is by humble, constant waiting, hanging upon God."¹²

⁸ Matt. 11:27.

¹⁰ FORREST, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁹ BEYSLAG, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 77.

¹¹ Mark 10:18.

¹² MASON, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

In other words, the passage confirms the thought of the unique fellowship of Jesus' soul with the Father. The measure of the exaltation of Jesus' life above every other is the fulness of the inflowing into him of the divine character.

Such utterances lead us, and must have led his immediate disciples, into the presence of a deeper mystery about the consciousness of Jesus. There were depths not easily fathomed, heights not easily scaled. In every human life there are

. . . . obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized.¹³

We are, none of us, merely human. But in Jesus this divine background of life was intensified in the highest possible degree, into the consciousness of an entirely unique and unutterable fellowship with God. God was infinitely close to Jesus of Nazareth, where, in spite of all "blank misgivings," he is infinitely distant from other men. Such fellowship, being ethical, tends toward the limit of personal identity.

The disciples of Jesus found that through their relationship to him they, too, were brought into a closer relationship to God. They were led in the direction of the same consciousness that reigned in him. The characteristic of the Christian life was this new fellowship with God, and Jesus was its mediator and fountain.

The men who entered into his consciousness looked at God with his eyes, thought of God in his way, learned to speak of God in his terms, and bequeathed to us as their abiding legacy an interpretation of Christ which was an interpretation of God.¹⁴

It was inevitable that before the fact of this new life all thought of Jesus in a merely official relation must give way. Messiahship must take on a purely spiritual character, and divine sonship must become more and more the expression of this character. Traces of this change of view are present in the synoptic gospels, but it is a witness to the trustworthiness of those narratives that this spiritually heightened significance of messiahship has not been allowed to

¹³ WORDSWORTH, "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

¹⁴ FAIRBAIRN, *op. cit.*, p. 376; see also GORDON, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

influence Jesus' own words. It appears in the words of the evangelist, or in the words of others regarding Jesus—words the tradition of which we may conceive to have remained in a more fluid condition than that of Jesus' own utterances. Such, for instance, are the words of the angel of the annunciation in the first chapter of Luke.

Paul knew Christ immediately in no other way than as the source of a new relation to God, the mediator of forgiveness and of a new spiritual life. Hence messiahship takes on for him an altogether spiritual character. Jesus is Messiah because he has wrought this spiritual result. "When it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me"¹⁵—sonship here is palpably exalted above any possible current conception of messiahship.

The Christ of Paul is the Christ of his experience, Christ interpreted to him by his vivid consciousness of the divine life which he owed to him. His Christology is the account of that experience in the terms suggested by thought and reflection upon it.¹⁶

Paul's thought of Christ as his Master began with the post-existent Christ, Christ in exaltation in the heavenly world. Every spiritual gift was "in Christ" and "through Christ." In other words, that post-existence had as its function the mediatorship of the fruits of his earthly life, reconciliation with God and the life of sonship, to the members of his mystic body, the church. Hence the uniform association of Christ with God. The earliest sentence which we have from Paul's pen, the salutation of First Thessalonians, may stand for the whole: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace."

The most difficult problem in Paul's Christology is to determine how his thought passed from the post-existence to the pre-existence of Christ. Holtzmann¹⁷ and Beyschlag,¹⁸ together with most Lutheran interpreters, find the middle term in the heavenly man of 1 Cor. 15:47. This man is "a life-giving spirit." He is the spiritual archetype of humanity. But I cannot persuade myself that this passing allusion to the second Adam as the man from heaven is

¹⁵ Gal. 1:15, 16.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 68 ff.

¹⁶ SOMERVILLE, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 66 ff.

important enough to carry the weight laid upon it. It seems rather like an inference from an already accepted idea than the means of attaining that idea. His allusion to Christ as "the spiritual rock" which followed the Israelites¹⁹ might seem more vital, as it carries the mediatorship of his post-existence back into his pre-existent state.

But it is not to be overlooked that even in First Corinthians, hence in the earlier stage of his thought (Holtzmann would say, in his only genuine writings), Paul ascribed to Christ cosmic functions. "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."²⁰ We can here see mediatorship of the new spiritual life of believers passing over into mediatorship of the divine life in general to the world. Such mediatorship could not have begun in time. It must have preceded creation, and its bearer was necessarily "the first-born of all creation."²¹ Such mediatorship between God and the world of his creation was the *motif* of most of the systems of thought of the age. Especially did Philo busy himself with the problem. Palestinian theology was scarcely less interested in it, as is witnessed by the functions assigned to the *Memra* in the teachings of the rabbis. Paul could hardly have been uninfluenced by these speculations. In later writings Paul (or, according to some critics, a Pauline writer) was busy with the intrusion of these speculations into the church in a form which threatened the sole mediatorship of Christ.

In general, the thought of pre-existence could not have lain far from Paul's thought of the Messiah. The investigations of Clemen and Charles may be accepted as having demonstrated the pre-Christian origin of the similitudes of the book of Enoch, and so as having proved, not only the use of the term "Son of man" in a personal sense of the Messiah, but also the idea of a pre-existent Messiah as current at least in some circles of Jewish thought. It would be strange if the Messiah had not been thought of as pre-existent. Moses was thought of as pre-existent,²² the heavenly Jerusalem was

¹⁹ I Cor. 10: 4.

²⁰ I Cor. 8: 6.

²¹ Col. 1: 15.

²² *Assump. Mos.*, I: 14. The offices assigned to Moses in this book run so closely parallel to those assigned by Christian thought to the Christ that it is hard to avoid a suspicion that the book was written as a polemic against advancing Christianity.

shown to Adam and to Moses,²³ every soul was created before the foundation of the world,²⁴ and even the place of abode of each soul.²⁵ In the Old Testament we have the furniture of the tabernacle, hence the tabernacle itself, pre-existing in heaven.²⁶ John sees the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God;²⁷ and Paul speaks as if the good works of Christians pre-existed, prepared beforehand by God that we should walk in them.²⁸ This mode of thought is more than Jewish, it is Semitic. The Mohammedan believes that the Koran pre-existed, written on leaves of gold; one Mohammedan sect believes that Ali pre-existed;²⁹ and I doubt not authorities could be found for the pre-existence of Mohammed himself. The "ideal pre-existence" formerly urged by Beyschlag and Harnack, and more recently by Wendt and Gilbert, is precisely what no Semitic thinker could conceive. All pre-existence was real. The purely ideal was beyond his grasp.

It is not fair, however, to assume that the pre-existence of Christ meant no more to Paul than the pre-existence ascribed to so wide a variety of objects.³⁰ In these cases it signified no more than the sheer inability of the Semitic thinker to grasp the purely ideal. Pre-existence was purely passive. In Paul the pre-existent Christ emerges from this passivity to become the organ of creation, and so to assume a most important function. The Jewish idea of a pre-existent Messiah forms only the background of Paul's thought. All else is accounted for by the growing thought of mediatorship.

But how did Paul conceive of the pre-existent Christ? Here the crucial passage is Phil. 2:5-8. Gifford's study,³¹ expanding Lightfoot's notes,³² must for the present be taken as the basis of discussion. The crucial word in this passage is *ἀρπαγμόν*, translated in the Authorized Version "robbery;" in the Revised Version, "a prize;" in the American Revision and margin of the Revised,

²³ *Apoc. Bar.*, 4: 2-7.

²⁶ Exod. 25: 40; *c/*. Heb. 8: 5.

²⁴ *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, 23: 5.

²⁷ Rev. 21: 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 49: 2.

²⁸ Eph. 2: 10.

²⁹ CURTISS, *Primitive Semitic Religion Today*, p. 107.

³⁰ BEYSCHLAG makes this assumption, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 261 f.

³¹ *The Incarnation: A Study of Phil.*, 2: 5-11.

³² *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*.

"a thing to be grasped." Gifford rightly rejects the first rendering, because it is no proper alternative to what follows the *ἀλλά* ("but"). But he then accepts the second rendering, following Lightfoot's definition, "a highly prized possession, an unexpected gain."³³ This misses the fundamental significance of the word brought out in the third rendering. Derived from *ἀρπάζω*, "to seize," it can mean only the act or the object of a violent seizure, and this Lightfoot's earlier references abundantly prove. In this passage the meaning "the act of seizure" being excluded, it can refer only to the object of a seizure, past, present, or future. But it is ethically unthinkable and grammatically impossible that it should here be asserted that Christ Jesus regarded "being on an equality with God" as the object of a past act of seizure, as the booty of an act of violence. Consequently the act of seizure is yet in the future, and its object is not yet in his grasp. The force of the passage is that he refused to be guilty of that act.

We now have the key to the meaning of the whole passage. Paul exhorts the Philippians to imitate the example of Christ, who, contemplating that existence on an equality with God which he did not possess, but which he conceivably might have seized, renounced such an expression of ambition, and instead laid aside even that advantage which he already possessed, and illustrated the profoundest humility. He emptied himself—of what? Not of the "being on equality with God," for he did not possess that. There is only one thing left of which he could have emptied himself, and that is the "existing in the form of God."³⁴

To this Gifford makes two objections: first, the imperfect participle "existing" (A. V. and R. V. "being," *ὑπάρχων*) refers to indefinitely continued action, not to action terminating when that of the principal verb begins.³⁵ Certainly, but the principal verb is "thought," *ἡγήσατο*, not "emptied," *ἐκένωσεν*, which refers to a subsequent act. An imperfect participle does not express action necessarily continued forever, and in this case the action terminates when that of *ἐκένωσεν* begins. Secondly, Gifford argues that

³³ GIFFORD, *op. cit.*, p. 65; LIGHTFOOT, *op. cit.*, p. III.

³⁴ This is essentially the view of PFLEIDERER, *Paulinism*, Vol. I, pp. 147 f.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 13 ff.

the word "form," *μορφή*, has the Aristotelian meaning of "the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual. and retained as long as the individual exists."³⁶ Consequently, "the form of God" could not be laid aside. But Lightfoot and Gifford have gone far afield for their interpretation when they have turned to the refined and artificial usage of Aristotle. Paul did not usually go to the philosophers for his vocabulary. The only other undoubted passage in the New Testament where the word is used is the description of the transfiguration in Luke, where it is said that "the fashion (*μορφή*) of his countenance was altered."³⁷ In the parallel accounts it is said that he was "transfigured" (*μετεμορφώθη*).³⁸ According to Aristotelian usage, this would mean that his countenance lost its distinguishing features, or even that it ceased to be a countenance at all; whereas all that the context suggests is that his countenance acquired a peculiar light or glory that shone upon it or from it. Indeed, the frequent use in the New Testament of the cognate words *μορφώω*, *μεταμορφώω*, *συμμορφίζω*, *συμμορφός*—all expressing changes of form which leave the individual still existing—refute the idea that the Aristotelian usage is normative. Nay, in our passage Christ is referred to as taking upon him "the form of a servant," which even Gifford must admit left his individuality untouched. If a *μορφή* could be assumed without prejudice to the individuality, it could equally well be laid aside.

Paul does not further define what he means by "the form of God" in which Christ pre-existed, but it stands in contrast to "the form of a servant" which he assumed. Now, servitude to Paul means bondage under the law,³⁹ and the law acquires its power through the flesh.⁴⁰ If we may hazard a guess, it is that by "the form of God" Paul meant an existence as pure spirit, and by taking "the form of a servant" he meant the assumption of the flesh with all that it involved.

Paul's pre-existent Christ therefore was not God. He did not even exist on an equality with God. His final exaltation was not to deity,⁴¹

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁷ 9: 29. Mark 16: 12 is similar, but it is in the disputed conclusion of the gospel.

³⁸ Matt. 17: 2; Mark 9: 2.

⁴⁰ Rom. 8: 3.

³⁹ Rom. 8: 15; 5: 1; Gal. 4: 24.

⁴¹ *Contra*, HOLTZMANN, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 371.

but only to "a name that is above every name." With this agree Paul's allusions to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,"⁴² and his doctrine of the final surrender of the kingdom to God.⁴³ Paul never calls Christ God. The only possible exceptions (Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13) are equally well explained in other ways; and, in spite of Sanday and Headlam's conclusion⁴⁴ that the weight of authority is slightly in favor of the reference of the term "God" to Christ in Rom. 9:5, we must hold to the uniform usage of Paul, unless compelled to abandon it by exegetical necessities. Much, indeed, is to be said in favor of the idea that the doxology of this passage is the gloss of an early copyist.

Thought could not remain at this point. Paul's Christology is in transition. His pre-existent Christ is a person in every sense of the term, but a person alongside of God—not God, and certainly not man. Paul falls short of the mediatorship which he is seeking because his Mediator is neither strictly God nor strictly man. Much of the confusion of christological discussion arises from regarding Paul as having reached the highest point of thought regarding the person of Christ.

The epistle to the Hebrews marks a slight advance in the direction of the identification of the Mediator with God. He is the "effulgence" (*ἀπαύγασμα*) of the divine glory, and "the very image (*χαρακτήρ*) of his substance."⁴⁵ He is related to God as light to flame, as seal to the die which is cast from it. The only reference in Paul which approaches this is that to Christ as "the image (*εἰκόν*) of the invisible God;"⁴⁶ but "image" does not suggest the intimacy of relation implied by the words in Hebrews, nor can it be related to the "substance" (*ὑπόστασις*) of God, as can the other. Before the end of the chapter, and in those immediately succeeding, we find sonship treated as something deeper than spiritual fellowship, that is, as something metaphysical. Moreover, the Son is, in quotations, directly addressed as God and Lord, in the Old Testament sense of the latter term. The Son of the epistle to the Hebrews is unequivocally divine, though this deity is won at the expense of ditheism.⁴⁷

⁴² Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; Eph. 1:3.

⁴³ 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

⁴⁴ *International Critical Commentary on Romans*, p. 238.

⁴⁵ Heb. 1:3.

⁴⁶ 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15.

⁴⁷ HOLTZMANN, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 298.

The final stage of the christological development of the New Testament is found in the prologue to the fourth gospel. Here mediatorship is carried into the Godhead itself as an eternal, integral part of the infinitely rich and complex life of the Deity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." *In the Godhead is mediatorship.* There is no need of a separate personality alongside of God to be Mediator between God and the world, for God includes in himself the function of mediation. In due time this mediatorial activity or life of God became incarnate in the historical human being, Jesus of Nazareth. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

To this subsumption of the Word under God the objection is made that in the clause, "the Word was God," the predicate noun lacks the article (*θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*), and hence all that is asserted is that the Word was divine, not that the Word was God. The answer is that the use of the article would have converted the clause into an identical proposition; the word was identical with God, was the whole of God, was all that there was of God. The author means nothing of the kind, while he does mean that the Word was one of the eternal modes of the divine Being. The Greek word *θεός* was not used in the New Testament in such a loose way as is our word "divine."

Thus far all is comparatively simple and clear. When we come to the gospel itself, we have expressions from Jesus which carry us back to a personal pre-existence alongside of God—a continuity of consciousness between his earthly and his pre-existent state. "No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man."⁴⁸ "What, then, if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before?"⁴⁹ "Before Abraham was I am."⁵⁰ "Glorify thou me with thine own glory which I had with thee before the world was."⁵¹ These utterances recall the double aspect under which the fourth gospel is to be viewed. On the one hand, it is not a mere work of fancy, not the elaboration of a theological system in the form of a historical romance. It is bound by the

⁴⁸ John 3:13.⁴⁹ 6:62.⁵⁰ 8:58.⁵¹ 17:5.

tradition of the historical Jesus. On the other hand, it is an interpretation of Jesus rather than a literal report of his words and deeds.⁵² The whole gospel is written in the light of the teaching of the prologue, and with a view to illustrating the various ideas there advanced, as Holtzmann demonstrates.⁵³ The word "Logos," to be sure is not repeated because it would have been inappropriate on the lips of the historical Jesus; because, in fact, he did not use it. On the other hand, it can hardly be questioned that utterances of the historical Jesus receive an interpretation in the light of the ideas of the prologue by which they are somewhat altered. "I and the Father are one."⁵⁴ "The Father knoweth me and I know the Father."⁵⁵ "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing."⁵⁶ "I am come [down from heaven], not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."⁵⁷ Omitting the words in brackets in the last quotation, all of these expressions would be appropriate on the lips of the Jesus of the synoptics. The utterances of the synoptics pointing to a mysterious background of consciousness have already been discussed. Can it be doubted that, underlying the expressions of the fourth gospel implying continuity of consciousness with a pre-existent state, there are utterances similar to those of the synoptics—utterances which have received a peculiar turn, in view of the doctrines held by the author and set forth in the prologue?⁵⁸ What better explanation can be found of the fact that the Jesus of the synoptics is never conscious of pre-existence, while the Jesus of the fourth gospel is sometimes conscious of a pre-existence in all the divine glory, and again is conscious only of the same relation of subordination to and dependence upon the Father as the Jesus of the synoptics?

This brings us to the question of the personality of the Logos. It is hardly possible in this connection to avoid the equivocal use of the word "person" which has vitiated so much modern Trinitarian discussion.⁵⁹ That the Logos was personal in and with the personality of God, that the Logos was not a mere emanation from God, or a power going forth from God, may be asserted with all confidence. But the question is: Had the Logos a personality separate from the

⁵² FAIRBAIRN, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

⁵⁵ 10: 15.

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 396 ff.

⁵⁶ 5: 19.

⁵⁸ WALKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 218 f.

⁵⁴ John 10: 30.

⁵⁷ 6: 38.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

personality of God the Father? No such question rose consciously upon the mind of the author of the fourth gospel, for the very conception of personality had not been formulated in ancient thought, Greek or Hebrew. All we can seek is latent presuppositions. Holtzmann here lays stress upon the use of the masculine instead of the neuter pronouns.⁶⁰ But how could the masculine *ὁ λόγος* be represented by anything else than masculine pronouns? The Logos certainly acquired a personality separate from God and complete in the historical Jesus, and it is easy to see that all the appearance of separate personality of the pre-incarnate Logos might be a reflex of this later state. Even this appearance of separate personality is lost in the opening sentence of the first epistle of John, where the pre-existent entity made manifest in the historical Jesus is boldly treated as neuter. If the above account of the development of christological conceptions in the New Testament is correct, then it is clear that the tendency of thought is toward the inclusion of the eternal Mediator between God and the world, and God and man, within the personality of the one God.⁶¹ All that gives a different appearance to the Logos of the fourth gospel is his identification with the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

But what of the justification of this process of reflection? Is it a mere speculation, of no more significance to us than a mere judgment of value? The question is whether such a life as that of Jesus of Nazareth recounted in the synoptic gospels, with all its mysterious heights and depths of consciousness, could have been lived without forcing a modification of the conception of God held before his coming? Here was a man who certainly stood closer to God than any other who had ever lived. Did he not give thought a new approach to God, a new fact to work upon, and that a fact surpassing every other in its significance for the interpretation of the divine nature? There can be but one answer to this question. Accepting the necessity of a modification of the thought of God in view of the life and consciousness of Jesus, it remains to ask whether that modification could have proceeded, or does today proceed, on any other lines than those laid down in the New Testament, pre-eminently in the prologue

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 394.

⁶¹ WALKER, *op. cit.*, p. 214; HOLTZMANN, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 414.

to the fourth gospel. In that prologue, to use Hegelian language, thought returns upon itself. The apprehension of God the Father implicit in the consciousness of the historic Jesus is unfolded and made explicit. We are carried back from the language of feeling and immediate consciousness to the eternal facts presupposed in them. If Jesus was what the synoptics represent him to have been, then God is what the prologue to the fourth gospel represents him to be.

I am not prepared to enter upon the discussion of the christological controversies of the church; but if Paine is approximately correct in his statement of the facts, then Arius planted himself upon the shortcomings of Paul's teaching; Athanasius and the Nicene fathers stood in general on the ground of the epistle to the Hebrews; Augustine and the pseudo-Athanasian creed have moved on to the prologue of the fourth gospel; modern Trinitarianism reads all in the light of a clearer apprehension of the historical Jesus and of the nature of personality.